

### *Measure Would Authorize \$50 Million to Protect & Provide Access to Historical Records Across U.S.*

*Washington, DC* - In an effort to safeguard American historical records and make them more accessible to the public, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Congressman John McHugh (R-NY) today introduced a bipartisan bill in the House that would authorize \$50 million annually for preservation activities. Hinchey and McHugh's Preserving the American Historical Record Act would also use those resources to make records more available to the public.

"From the local to the federal level, this country's history is well-documented in a variety of ways, but those documents and materials are often not maintained in a way that properly preserves them and displays them in a way that enables people of all ages to research and learn from them," Hinchey said. "This bill will provide the resources needed to effectively preserve our country's historical documents in ways that will make them more accessible to the public for generations to come."

"Americans have long recognized the importance of preserving history through the support of such institutions as the Library of Congress, National Archives, and the Smithsonian Institution. However, on a state and local level, preservation efforts are often hindered due to a lack of resources necessary to ensure adequate preservation. In the 23rd District, which I am proud to represent, there are some 300 non-profit organizations and over 650 local governments that hold numerous records documenting the people and the history of Central and Northern New York," said McHugh. "This bipartisan bill would help to ensure those records are not only maintained, but also are accessible to any person looking for more information about region, past events, or family history."

The Preserving the American Historical Record Act would authorize \$50 million to preserve and provide access to historical records by supporting:

- \* The creation of a wide variety of access tools, including archival finding aids, documentary editions, indexes, and images of key records online;
- \* Preservation actions to protect historical records from harm, prolong their life, and preserve them for public use, including digitization projects, electronic records initiatives, and disaster preparedness and recovery;

\* Initiatives to use historical records in new and creative ways to convey the importance of state, territorial, and community history, including the development of teaching materials for K-12 and college students, active participation in National History Day, and support for life-long learning opportunities; and

\* Programs to provide education and training to archivists and others who care for historical records, ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfill their important responsibilities.

The Council of State Archivists, the Society of American Archivists, and the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administration fully support Hinchey and McHugh's legislation and are prepared to help coordinate this initiative if the bill is approved and signed into law. Base funding would be provided to each state or territory, with the remainder of funding distributed using a population/area-based formula. A 50 percent match for any funding awards would be required of state and local partners. Hinchey sponsored identical legislation in the previous session of Congress with McHugh's support.